



Questionnaire for Candidates 2009

1. Why are you running for office? (please limit your responses to 50 words)

I want to set the foundation for a new prosperity for our economy and families, with transportation choices, responsible environmental preservation and genuine regional leadership.

I will build on my record as a reformer taking on the tough issues to find effective solutions to the problems we face.

2. In the past year King County has lost 20,000 jobs and the unemployment rate has risen from under four percent to eight percent. What are three specific actions that you, as an elected leader for the City/County/Port would pursue in the first year after your election to help reverse this trend and create a job-growing economy?

1. **Leverage federal stimulus dollars.** This past week I introduced legislation that will create a framework for utilizing and monitoring federal stimulus package resources, especially for infrastructure and other projects that create jobs now and facilitate future economic growth. As Executive, I will build upon this legislation to continue maximizing federal investment in our region.
2. **Create strong partnerships.** King County government's direct economic development role is limited—but it does need to be an effective and relevant partner with private and public sector entities to assure efficient transportation and transit service, and tax and permitting structures that are good for prosperity and job creation. The Executive's office should be a bully pulpit for King County—setting a direction for recruitment and expansion of business and breaking down bureaucratic barriers.
3. **Redefine County government.** A central tenet of my campaign is that King County government needs a culture change—away from self-perpetuation and defending the status quo, and toward innovation, efficiency and a commitment to service. Clearly, King County needs to better prioritize, in concert with our 39 cities, our special districts and the state. But it primarily must get its internal financial house in order. The county must build a system of goals and measures so robust that they can deliver efficiencies time and again, and not just a set of one-time cuts. We must engage our front-line workers in this effort, because they are the ones who know where the inefficiencies are. Ultimately, we must generate the evidence to be able to direct limited tax dollars where they can do the most good. We have to be willing to terminate programs that no longer work, as I called for with the broken animal shelter, to streamline others, such as building permits and public health inspections, and to invest in others, such as public safety innovations and transportation. And we need to control the year-to-year costs of doing business. We cannot sustain dramatic growth in benefit costs for government employees, for instance,

while revenues are flat or even declining, and services are being cut. At least those of us who make the most should shoulder a bit of the cost of our own health care benefits, for example.

3. As the economy has faltered, tax revenue has fallen on all levels of government, requiring cuts to government services and/or increased revenue to balance the budget. Where would you suggest the cuts take place? Do you support seeking additional revenue, and if so, where would you suggest looking for revenue?

Especially in this economy, we cannot ask strapped taxpayers for more without proving that we are making the best, most efficient use of what we have.

During my time as budget chair, I acted and directed all staff to act according to a simple principle: save more and spend less. Within days of becoming council chair I moved to dramatically restructure the council's committees and staffing, to streamline operations and improve efficiency.

I used the same problem-solving approach during my years in Olympia. I worked with Senator Lisa Brown to create the Gates Commission to fix our state's broken tax system—including business and job creation, promotion of home ownership, establishment of a constitutional Rainy Day Fund, tax reduction for working families, and other reforms.

To paraphrase our new president, as Executive I will put an end to programs that no longer work, reform those in need of improvement, and invest finite resources where they can be proven to deliver maximum value.

In other words, the measure of effectiveness is not spending more dollars, but getting the most for each dollar spent.

Let me offer a specific example. King County will spend \$214 million this year to provide benefits for County employees and their families, up 9% over the previous year. That level of cost growth is unsustainable. I am currently developing a proposal to have highly paid senior managers and elected officials pay a portion of the cost of their health care coverage. It is one thing to offer front line employees earning modest salaries good benefits. It is another to expect strapped taxpayers to pay the complete cost of coverage for those who earn well above the median income—people like myself. By implementing this proposal we will begin the process of controlling the rise in the cost of government and will free up funds that can be redirected to providing the core services that taxpayers and businesses rely upon.

4. From your interactions with the business community, what would you say are its two most pressing issues? How would you address them?

Today the largest government issue affecting business generally is the lack of a coherent, coordinated public policy agenda to stimulate our state and regional economy. This is a problem driven as much by Olympia as local and regional governments. To address the concerns and priorities of business requires a comprehensive and meaningful assessment of tax policy, higher and basic education investments, transportation and transit improvements, and generally demands that elected officials set aside partisan and jurisdictional squabbles and work together on a common agenda for economic progress.

I intend to work on this issue in the same way I have approached my tenure in the legislature and county council—as a plain spoken problem solver unafraid to address and take on tough issues. I am committed to tax reform—making taxes more equitable and lowering the burden on property

owners, small businesses and startups. As outlined above, I am personally committed to a fundamental restructuring of King County government, putting words into action by cutting staff at the council and proposing elimination of broken county services. I am committed to a stronger UW and have advocated for higher education while on the county council—traveling to Olympia to testify on legislation to benefit our marquee research institution. I am committed to breaking down old political barriers and improving relationships between King County and Olympia.

As Executive, I'll be a strong, consistent leader on these issues, crafting not just sound bites, but sound policy that will bring our region together, and drive our economy forward.

A related second issue is a sense that the business community is not given due consideration for its role in driving the prosperity of the region. There is, I believe some truth to this observation—driven in part by the policy failures outlined above, and by regional divisions within King County. These increasingly meaningless distinctions are counterproductive in terms of overall economic health. We should be celebrating and enhancing the strong and growing sectors of our economy—regardless of where they are located in our region, and promoting the sense of unity needed to drive the policy agenda. For example, Microsoft's thousands of employees who live in Seattle don't see an eastside/Seattle divide—they see failure to collaborate and reach closure on issues like 520 replacement.

The Chamber can and does play a huge and important role in providing a forum for unity and giving a single voice to the common priorities of business. I believe the King County Executive can and should be a leader in also promoting a unified—if broader—agenda for a strong economy.

As the only council member—or candidate for executive—whose current district is equally divided between Seattle and suburban/rural/unincorporated areas I have never made an artificial distinction between communities. My job as their representative is to fight for ALL of the families and businesses I serve. As executive, my job will be to advance this common agenda to a much larger degree.

When we speak with one voice, then we can truly acknowledge the role regions of the county play in advancing our economy, but in a productive, positive way. The growing eastside technology and retail sectors are worth celebrating as an increasingly important driver for economic growth. Seattle's growing and dynamic biotechnology industries are another bright spot worthy of greater promotion and investment. The Port and related industries need all of our help to remain competitive and employ a huge base of south county workers.

As Executive, I want to leverage countywide support for our strong regional employers and job centers.

5. In what areas has the government worked best with the business community? In what areas has the government not worked well with business?

I think government has worked well in several ways. First and most obvious is transportation. Business and government have partnered to move forward unprecedented investments in our regional transportation network—the largest current investments anywhere in the country. Transit is another area of success. I think to a lesser degree we have been successful in moving incentives for targeted industries—from software to aerospace—in order to protect and expand jobs. Finally, I think there has been relatively strong collaboration on higher education, from vocational training to four-year research institutions.

I have already outlined many areas where there is significant room for improvement—from tax policy to controlling costs to broader policy agenda setting to streamlining permitting and other government services.

6. Please list some of your key endorsements (individuals or organizations).

Sen. Lisa Brown, Senate Majority Leader, 3rd LD
Sen. Ken Jacobsen, State Senator, 46th LD
Sen. Joe McDermott, State Senator, 34th LD
Sen. Ed Murray, State Senator, 43rd LD
Sen. Kevin Ranker, State Senator, 40th LD
Rep. Eileen Cody, State Representative 34th LD
Rep. Bob Hasegawa, State Representative, 11th LD
Rep. Sharon Nelson, State Representative, 34th LD
Rep. Geoff Simpson, State Representative, 47th LD

Rep. Brendan Williams, State Representative, 22nd LD
Snohomish County Council Chair Mike Cooper
Burien Mayor Joan McGilton
Tukwila City Councilmember Joe Duffie
Tukwila City Councilmember Verna Griffin
Former Covington Councilmember Rebecca Clark
Port of Seattle Commissioner Gael Tarleton
Vashon-Maury Island Democratic Club
34th LD Democrats

7. What is your fundraising goal and how much have you raised to date?

I intend to raise between \$550,000-\$800,000. I have raised nearly \$150,000 in just under 10 weeks to date and my campaign is well on track to achieve our fundraising goals and implement our full voter communication plan.

8. Why should the Alki Foundation recommend you?

With your support, we can and will set the foundation for a new prosperity, with real transit and transportation choices, responsible preservation of our environment, and genuine regional leadership. Our county government can become a model of sustainable efficiency and innovation. King County government is in need of real reform, not more of the old guard, and as Executive I intend to make the business community a serious partner in the creation of long-overdue change.

*Please be sure to attach a copy of your resume as well as any political materials you have produced and would like to include. **Materials must be returned no later than April 27, 2009.**